

WOMAN a RIDDLE;

A Certain Care,

BUT

Uncertain Comfort:

OR, THE

Misery of Early WEDLOCK.

A True and Genuine Account of a Noted Lady in Scotland-
Yard, who lately Eloped from her Husband.

Giving an Impartial Relation, of her Birth, Parentage, Education, Behaviour and
Intrigues; with the Noble and Honourable Esq; C—— by, her Lover and Consort;
Before her Marriage And at her going Away. with the Letters that pass between
them, while she was at the Boarding-School, and at her Departure.

TOGETHER

With a P O E M of Condolence Inscrib'd to C——y, Esq;



L O N D O N:

Printed for J. RAWLINGSO N, in Cornhill.



Woman a Riddle, &c.

Calista, a young and beautiful Lady, whose Charms and Wit was Superior to her immense Fortune; was Born of a good, as well as a Wealthy Family; her Parents being Dead, her Guardians placed her at a Boarding School at—where she had all the Advantage of Nature and Art to recommend her; besides a great Portion, which is the strongest Motive of all And tho' her Governors, and Mistresses were order'd to have a watchfull Eye over her, Love and Money can do any thing; Jove himself could fall in a Golden Shower, or assume the shape of a Swan, Bull, or any thing to carry on his Intrigues, and gain his Ends. Every Day giving new Proofs of her Wit, Natural Gifts and Endowments, but especially open Mouth'd Fame spread abroad the greatness of her Riches and Fortune, which induc'd *Brastus*, Son of a noble Earl, Officer in the Army to insinuate into the Favour of her Attendants, and by the help of a few Yellows, which he gave to a Female Confident, had the following Letter convey'd to her Hand.

Madam,

Since the Fates, or rather your more
Srigid Guardians, hinder me from
Conversing with you Personally; let

these Lines inform you, that you are
the Life of my Soul, and the first Fruits
of my Affections, I saw you, I Lov'd
you, I admire and adore you; am now
your Captive, and lost and undone with-
out your Pity; see and Speak with me
this Evening at the lower end of the
Grove, whilst I unburthen the Grief,
Sorrows, Cares, Vexations, Doubts, Anxi-
ety, Distracti n, Despair, &c, which o'er-
presses my Heart, or else I Die and Perish.

Brastus.

Calista was tenderly touch'd and Affect-
ed with this Epistle and after some Strug-
gles betwixt Love and Modesty, she re-
turn'd this Answer by the Bearer.

S I R.

HO as yet a Stranger to the Passi-
on you so earnestly speak of, I will
not rashly censure it in others; having
often heard, that Love has no Laws but
its own: Therefore I permit you to see
me this Evening, (tho' Interviews of
this kind are against my Inclination)
that I may reprove your Presumption,
in making such Overtures, to the uncon-
cerned

Calista.

'Tis

'Tis impossible to express the Joy and Rapture *Erastus* was in, at her Condescension; but thought every Moment a Year, till the happy Hour appointed came; then throwing himself at her Feet, he used so many soft endearing Expressions, that he soon brought her tender yielding Heart to a Compliance. She was now arriv'd to the Age of 14, her Blood grew warm, and her Confinement *irksome*; and she concluded 'twas better to be a Prisoner at large, than immur'd betwixt Walls, and restrain'd to private Walks, little different from a Nunnery. In short, she resolves to be a Wife, and was quickly made one. *Erastus* having concerted proper Measures, a Day was fixt, he carried her off, and Marriage was consummated to both their Joys and Contentment; for they thought themselves the happiest Couple in the Universe. The Day spent in Pleasure, the Night in Nuptial Endearments, yet not so privately, but that they had a Multitude of Illustrious Visitants who diverted them so as to make the time pass more agreeably away.

They were so intirely wrapt up in Bliss, they did not give themselves the Liberty to think there was a Possibility of imbittering their sweet Delights; they enjoy'd the present Hours without any regard to the future, and imagined the Honey Moon would last for ever. And to Crown their Happiness their Friends and Relations were reconcil'd in a little Time, and both receiv'd into his Father the Earl's House, where they continued in Love and Affection, till an unwelcome piece of News brought to the young Hero) blasted all his Joy, and put a sudden Damp to his Courage.

When they'd been Marry'd about three Years, *Calista* being then about 17 she went abroad one Evening unattended, and order'd her Footman to meet her at a certain Place, where she us'd to pay Visits in

half an hour: In the mean time the Lady made an Elopement; and the Footman not finding her, went and acquainted his Master with what he had any Knowledge of, who immediately sent Messengers to the several Stairs in *Westminster* to hear if such a Gentlewoman of whom a Description was given, had taken a Boat there; as also to the several Avenues and Roads to inform themselves if she had passed through any of them. But no Account could be given of *Calista*, nor any Reasons assign'd for her Elopement; nor is known whether she be gone into Quarters of Refreshment, or has deserted in Order to serve under another Officer.

Her Friends and Relations were troubled and ashamed at her Deportment, and knew not what to Conjecture about her. Whilst others less concern'd suggested, that perhaps some extraordinary Accident had befallen her. But these doubts soon vanish'd for in two or three Days after the Gentleman her Husband happen'd to open a Scrutore, found a Note, and in it her Wedding Ring. The Poise whereof was this.

Whilst Life doth last, or this is Gold,

My Love to You, shall ne'er Wax Old.

The Contents of her Note, was to this Effect.

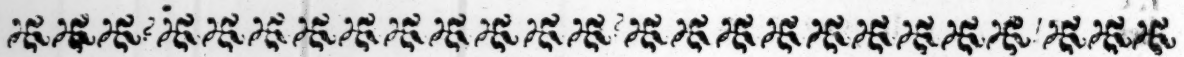
S I R,

I Need not tell you that I leave you, because you'll find it: Nor the Reasons why, because I have none. For to do you Justice, I can neither accuse you for want of Love, nor other Defects; but own my self a Woman, and will indulge my Fancy. Time and tartling Fame, will inform you what is become of me, 'till then rest contented, and think as Favorably as you can of. *Calista*.

Reading those Lines, put him in a greater Perplexity than ever. Sometimes imagining she had only withdrawn, to try his Patience, Constancy and Affection. But those

those Thoughts were soon supplanted by raging Jealousie; concluding she could never make so unwarrantable a Procedure; unless to gratifie the Concupiscence of some more admir'd Lover. Then again he consider'd, he had not discover'd any Levity in her Behaviour, more than what was common to her Youth, and Sex; and that

he knew himself Man sufficient to perform connubial Rites. Yet on the other Hand knowing Women to be a Mistry, their minds Fickle and Tempers inconstant; he dreaded she had thrown herself into the Arms of another. In this Distriction we'll leave him, and recommend the following Poem to his perusal.



A P O E M,

Of Condolence Inscrib'd to Elq; C---ly.

Femina non est ad bibenda Fides. Hor.

ARE Women constant, so's the Moon
I'll trust the Waves and Winds as soon
Their Syren Smiles, shall ne'er allure
My Heart to think 'em safe or sure
Untill they're dead and then we may
Believe or credit what they say
Their Thoughts and Words are Fraud and Guile
And Tears like Crocodils of Nile
For all is feign'd which They pretend
To either Husband or a Friend
And he that doth in them confide
As well may stop the Sun and Tide
Alike Success shall on him wait
And sure he has a better Fate
That Writes in sand or grasps the Air,
Than he relies upon the Fair.
Fair did I say? 'twas my Mistake
I must recant till they forsake
Their Patches, Paint, their Walhes, Drefs
And subtle Arts which they profess

To help out Nature, and deceive
Poor Hoodwink'd Man that won't perceive
That Woman is alio're a Cheat
And Face and Heart alike Deceit
Within, without, a Counterfeit
A Gulph of Woe and dreadful Pitt
And he's undone that falls therein
Nor can I pardon him the Sin.
Insatiate as the Grave or Sea,
Imperious as a moorish Bey,
Contentious as the Fish-gate Crew,
And Faithless as a Turk or Jew,
Ambitious, Proud, as Tyrant Kings:
Aggreeing like, discordant Strings.
Tho' sworn to honour and obey,
Shee'l Domineer, and bear the Sway,
Or whore at home, or run Away.
Then who'd be tyed to such as these?
That loves his Freedom or his Ease
And sure he is bewitch'd and curst
That has a Second, plagu'd with First.

F I N I S.